

3.23 Relationship Between Local Short-Term Uses of the Human Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

3.23.1 Introduction

Implementation of the MCP Build Alternatives will result in attainment of short-term and long-term transportation objectives at the expense of some long-term social, aesthetic, biological, noise, parkland, and other land use impacts. The proposed MCP transportation improvements are based on State and local comprehensive planning efforts that consider the need for present and future traffic requirements within the context of present and future land use development. As a Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) transportation corridor, the MCP project is an integral component of the long-range planning for Riverside County that was conducted under the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) from 1999 to 2004.

3.23.2 Environmental Consequences

3.23.2.1 Build Alternatives

Short-term losses and impacts of all the MCP Build Alternatives project include:

- Economic losses experienced by businesses from temporary displacements, relocations, or traffic detours;
- Temporary construction impacts to residents and visitors such as increased noise, impaired air quality from dust and debris, increased nighttime light, blocked viewsheds, and motorized and nonmotorized traffic delays or detours; and
- Temporary loss of productivity on and near sites used as the temporary construction staging areas.

Short-term benefits of the MCP project include:

- Increased jobs and revenue generated during construction.

Long-term losses of the MCP project would include:

- Permanent impacts to plant resources, wildlife resources, and open space;
- Permanent impacts to residents and visitors, such as increased noise levels, increased nighttime light, and altered viewsheds;
- Permanent impacts to community character and cohesion;
- Consumption of construction materials and energy;

- Permanent removal of residential and nonresidential uses and possible permanent loss of those uses in the communities along the MCP alignments if they are not relocated in the immediate project vicinity; and
- Permanent loss of archaeological sites and the values associated with those sites.

Long-term gains of the MCP project would include:

- Improvement of the regional transportation network in this part of Riverside County;
- Increased access and congestion relief on local streets and highways; and
- Improvement to water resources and storm water management facilities, including surface water and floodplains.

3.23.2.2 No Build Alternatives

Alternative 1A would not change the overall existing conditions of the MCP study area as described throughout Chapter 3, Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation Measures. Therefore, Alternative 1A would not result in the losses/impacts described above and would not provide the benefits of the MCP project described above.

Under Alternative 1B, impacts to the existing condition described throughout Chapter 3, Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation Measures, would be expected to be less than the MCP Build Alternatives because Alternative 1B includes improvements to Ramona Expressway as a part of the Riverside County General Plan Circulation Element. Similar to Alternative 1A, Alternative 1B would not provide the full benefits of the MCP described above.

3.23.3 Conclusions

Implementation of the MCP project would result in trade-offs between addressing transportation needs and goals (short and long-term) and adverse environmental impacts (short- and long-term).

The MCP project would provide a direct and continuous route connecting major population and employment centers in an area of western Riverside County that is currently undergoing substantial population and employment growth. The MCP project would provide increased capacity and a limited access freeway compatible with a future multimodal transportation system, accommodate the Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) National Network for trucks, and provide roadway geometrics to meet State highway design standards.

The MCP project is proposed as the west-east intracounty transportation corridor planned under CETAP. As discussed in Section 3.6, the existing roads and intersections in the MCP study area would operate at unacceptable levels of service in 2040 or sooner without implementation of the MCP project. The MCP project would serve to improve traffic conditions in the region. The long-term benefits to the community (through transportation improvements) will be weighed against the short- and long-term environmental impacts of the MCP project.

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